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bea·con (bê ′ ken) *noun*
A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or

WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Focus on: Choosing Your Own Future

by Mark Mina
Deputy Administrator
Office of Field Operations

FSIS wants and intends the current workforce to be the nucleus of the workforce of the future. Our motto might be, *FSIS wants YOU to be part of the workforce of the future.*

I deeply respect the great personal sacrifices many FSIS employees continue to make today to ensure that America's food is safe. Working in food safety today is a difficult job, and it will never become an easy one. However, the food safety system of tomorrow will also offer challenging and rewarding work.

Perspectives on the future. Today, you are the backbone of the system, the roots of the tree, the unsung heroes. I can't imagine any future FSIS without you. In my vision of the future, you are there. However, among current FSIS employees there are at least as many individual perspectives on the future as there are leaves on a tree. For example:

Many of you are visibly enthusiastic about being part of the most meaningful change in the food safety system in decades. You may be looking forward to one or more "new careers" in FSIS. Perhaps you're going to school full or part-time, or thinking about it. You have made a positive choice to contribute all you can to the food safety system of the future, and you want to know how to go about that.

Some of you may be unsure of how much more change you want to fit into your life, or exactly how to go about it. You'd like to understand your options so you can plan for a future in FSIS that will work for you and for the Agency.

A few of you may be looking ahead to a future that does not include FSIS. You have invested a lot of time and energy in food safety, and are proud of what you have accomplished. However, now your personal priorities are changing. Perhaps you'd like to continue serving the American people at FSIS as long as you can in your current position.

Whatever your perspective is on the workforce of the future, the Agency *respects it.* And we want to ensure you have the information you need to choose your own future, to make the personal decision that is best for you.

The Agency also wants to make sure that the process of implementing the workforce of the future is fair to and respectful of both current *and* future employees. For, although FSIS views the current workforce as the nucleus of the workforce of the future, as the need arises we will also recruit qualified external candidates for professional, technical, and administrative positions. In the future, FSIS will be a much more diverse workforce than we are today.

FSIS also wants to be the employer of *choice* for its employees, whether you have been here for 20 years or 2 months, and whatever your job series is.

A personal action plan for the future. FSIS will provide you information to help you identify and reach your future goals. But the bottom line is that *each person is responsible for his or her own career.* The Agency cannot set your career or personal goals for you. We cannot eliminate the hard work (including learning new skills and concepts) you may need to complete in order to reach your goal. What FSIS *can* do, however, is establish an environment in which the Agency encourages and supports you toward your goal.

In This Issue…

That is why I encourage you to begin now to develop your personal action plan for the future. Five critical steps will help you choose and reach that future:

Know yourself. What kind of work do you want to do, now and in the future? The first step in developing a personal action plan for the future is to identify, define, and clarify your career goals and the objectives to help you reach those goals.
The Agency will continue to share information with employees on opportunities now and in the future. For example, the September *Beacon* article by Associate Administrator Margaret Glavin described some of the differences between a food inspector, a consumer safety inspector, and a consumer safety officer. Information can help; but only you can decide if you are interested in a new opportunity or not.

Know what FSIS needs. This year, for example, the Agency introduced two new job series into our workforce-- consumer safety inspector and consumer safety officer. The workforce is becoming more diverse.

Take the initiative to develop your skills*.* Employees who are willing to take the initiative *now* can begin preparing themselves to *compete for* the jobs of tomorrow. Over the next few months, the Agency will provide all employees information on education and training opportunities. *The Agency will honor its statutory obligations to the bargaining unit.*

Ask for help. What are your questions about preparing for the workforce of the future? The Steering Committee on the Workforce of the Future has been developed, in part, to ensure that your questions and concerns are addressed.

If you are a member of the bargaining unit or an employee organization, make sure your representative understands your questions, concerns, and suggestions. If you are not a member of the bargaining unit or an employee organization, send your question to the Workforce of the Future mailbox on the global distribution list for Outlook (or see the end of this article).

Do it! Some current employees may have applied for "workforce of the future" vacancies or have taken courses to learn new skills. Others may not be quite ready to decide how you want to participate in the workforce of the future. Over the next several months, we hope to provide you with information that will help you get ready to set your goal -- and work to reach it!

Transition 2. Transition 1 is almost over -- the period during which FSIS completed rulemaking, reorganized for implementation, and implemented the final rule on pathogen reduction and HACCP.

Transition 2 is the period during which FSIS will: (1) in concert with other federal, state, and local agencies, implement a farm-to-table national food safety system; and (2) redeploy our resources, including workforce, to support the new national system. The probable duration for Transition 2, is October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2005.

The working title of Transition 2 was chosen because it appropriately implies continuity with Transition 1. That "transition to the new FSIS" in turn evolved from the Agency's work in the Top to Bottom Review and Day One projects of 1995-96.

Steering Committee. Open communication and fairness are just two of the reasons the Agency's executives have formed the Steering Committee on the Workforce of the Future.

One of the key tasks of the Workforce of the Future Steering Committee is to oversee and coordinate activities of many different groups addressing "workforce of the future" initiatives in order to ensure a "one FSIS" approach.

The executives also have agreed to DRAFT guiding principles. The Steering Committee on the Workforce of the Future will fine-tune the guiding principles. Then, each of the working groups under the "workforce of the future" umbrella will be asked to use the guiding principles in developing policy recommendations as well as implementation plans and specific procedures.

DRAFT Guiding Principles for Transition 2 to the Farm-to-Table National Food Safety System and the Workforce of the Future

FSIS developed guiding principles for Transition 1. Now, as FSIS begins Transition 2 to a new national, farm-to-table food safety system and the workforce of the future, guiding principles are just as important.

Change is inevitable, but continuity is also critical. These guiding principles, which might be thought of as ground rules for Transition 2, provide a framework against which Agency actions and decisions will be considered to ensure a consistent FSIS approach.

Theme: Many current FSIS employees will have jobs in the workforce of the future.

1. The Agency goal is to have a position to offer every FSIS employee wishing to remain with the Agency. The position offered will likely involve different duties and responsibilities and may require the employee to relocate.

Theme: FSIS will help prepare current employees to serve in the workforce of the future --if employees take the initiative to prepare themselves.

2. The Agency goal is to assist all FSIS employees to prepare themselves to serve in a farm-to-table national food safety system, whether in their current positions or in different roles. At the same time, FSIS also recognizes that funding constraints may limit the availability of funding for Agency plans to train and educate employees. To that end, and to the extent possible, FSIS will abide by the following more specific commitments to employees:

3. The Agency will provide all employees with information that will help them evaluate their *current* qualifications against qualifications for specific occupational categories in the workforce of the future.

4. The Agency will provide all employees with information on education and training resources pertinent to *gaining* the qualifications needed to serve in specific occupational categories in the workforce of the future.

Theme: Fairness

5. The Agency will develop and implement policies and processes that ensure consistency and fairness in the allocation of resources for training and educating current employees to serve in the workforce of the future.

6. The Agency will develop and implement policies and processes for staffing the new organizational structure to ensure consistency and fairness in treatment of employees in similar employment situations.

7. Sensitivity and attention to civil rights impact and equal employment opportunity principles will be an integral part of dealing with all transition issues, and the Agency will continue to honor its contractual obligations.

Theme: FSIS will minimize disruption to employees during Transition 2. Communication *is a critical mechanism for minimizing disruption and enabling employees to make their own choices -- not have choices made for them.*

8. FSIS acknowledges that change is difficult for employees. To the best of our ability, the transition will be managed in a way that minimizes disruption to FSIS programs or the lives of FSIS employees.

9. The Agency recognizes that employees who are well informed about the future are in the best position to make sound decisions about their personal futures. Therefore, there will be continuous, open, and timely communication with all employees on transition issues and progress on implementation. The Agency will also continue its open public dialogue on workforce of the future issues.

Theme: FSIS can provide limited assistance to current employees who do not wish to relocate or to develop themselves for broader roles in the future.

10. Efforts will be made to find positions in the Agency for employees whose functions are being reduced or discontinued.

If you have any questions about the Workforce of the Future, please contact Yvonne Davis, Chair of the Committee, on 202-720-5397 or via e-mail at yvonne.davis@usda.gov.

TAMU Food Safety Education Program Will Count as 5 Semester Hours

The Agency has determined that all of the 5 semester hours awarded by Texas A&M University (TAMU) for completion of the Food Safety Education Program will be credited toward the 30 semester hours of scientific coursework needed to qualify for the GS0-696 Consumer Safety Officer Series. The "Workforce of the Future" article in the September issue of the *Beacon* indicated that 3 of the semester hours would be credited and generated questions that led FSIS to reconsider this issue. The Agency's Human Resources Division has determined that all 5 semester hours will be credited toward the scientific coursework requirement because the interpersonal skills segment of the FSEP is so closely interwoven with the food safety principles and scientific concepts in the program. *This decision does not affect the applications of any of those selected as "qualified" for the 30 Consumer Safety positions announced earlier this summer; no one previously unqualified became qualified in view of those 2 additional credits.*

RON’S CORNER

FSIS Training and Education Steering Committee (TEC-2001)
by Ron Hicks
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On August 5, Administrator Billy announced the formation of an FSIS Steering Committee that will examine the training and education needs of Agency employees. The committee is charged with planning the Agency’s future education activities in the broadest sense: first, what knowledge, skills, and abilities do our employees need to successfully interact with all those involved with food safety, and second, what is our responsibility as a Federal Agency to provide for shared training and education opportunities with our partners in other Federal agencies, State agriculture and health departments, the international trading arena, industry, and consumer groups in order to move together toward our strategic vision: "the food you eat is risk-free." In addition, the committee will look beyond traditional instructional methods, such as state-of-the-art technical training, distance learning, and continuing education.

All FSIS employees, including the employee organizations, as well as other stakeholders who share our interest in and commitment to food safety, will be solicited for input into this program. The wealth of experience from groups beyond the Agency will ensure that all interests are represented.

Judy Riggins, Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation (OPPDE), serves as the sponsor of the committee. Peggy Nunnery from the Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS) has agreed to lead, coordinate, and oversee this effort as the Project Manager. Core committee members include Paula Bailey-Johnson, Mary Gioglio, Marianne Okal, and Milo Christianson, Office of Management; Ginny Olson, Sibyl Wright, and Perry Davis, OPPDE; Sandy Facinoli and Sharin Sachs, Office of the Administrator; Delila Parham, OPHS; and Pat Whitehead, Office of Field Operations.

We will provide more information on the progress of the committee in future issues of the *Beacon*.

FSIS To Build Leadership Competencies

Today's managers find themselves pressed into new roles and facing an entirely different set of challenges. Their ability to function in this whirlwind of change determines whether modern organizations succeed or fail. FSIS understands that it cannot stand still when it comes to equipping its workforce at all levels with urgently needed leadership capabilities. Recognizing this, the Agency is unveiling the Management and Leadership Development Program (MLDP), which will offer an array of leadership growth opportunities to employees.

The conceptual foundation for the MLDP is found in 30 leadership competencies defined by FSIS and the Office of Personnel Management after considerable research. A number of competencies are targeted to all employees, including non supervisors (i.e., time management, customer service, and continual learning), while the emphasis for managers and supervisors centers on collaboration, team formation, and conflict resolution skills. Executives focus on such competencies as vision, political savvy, and entrepreneurship. The MLDP also offers participants the opportunity to engage in multi-source assessment, a process popular in modern corporations in which a person gets feedback from his/her boss, peers, and subordinates, if any.

Although separate and apart from formal performance appraisal, multi-source feedback is nevertheless a powerful source of motivation to grow. Armed with this kind of feedback, employees and their supervisors are much more likely to seek out training that addresses actual learning needs. It is anticipated that the MLDP will afford FSIS the unique chance to simultaneously promote leadership and conserve scarce training resources. Current plans are for the Agency to introduce the MLDP on a limited basis to GS-14 and above employees. As funding becomes more available, the program will expand its scope to include those at lower grade levels, both supervisory and non-supervisory. Questions concerning the MLDP should be directed to the Organization and Employee Development Branch, Human Resources Division, on 202-720-4937.

FSIS Preference Program Goals
by Julie Adams
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Do you know all of the people involved in the procurement process? Well, there is the program person that needs something; the budget guru who allocates the funds; the Contracting Officer who actually buys the something; and ... the American taxpayer who ultimately provides the money. Yes, the taxpayer is an important customer for FSIS and is a crucial and integral part of your procurement process.

FSIS spends over 20 million in taxpayer dollars annually in the marketplace. With that kind of expenditure, all taxpayers have the right to see an equitable share of the investment. Therefore, since 1979, public law has required that a percentage of all federal procurement dollars be spent with small, small disadvantaged, small women-owned, and small minority owned businesses. This is referred to as the Preference Program Goals program. The objective of this program is to equitably distribute the wealth of federal procurement dollars to all businesses and to help ensure the success of the American dream in American commerce. New this year are goals for procurements with companies in historically underutilized business areas or HUBZones, and with companies that support the National Institutes for the Blind and Severely Handicapped under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act.

FSIS supports these efforts with procurement goals of our own for all these diverse small business enterprises. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2000, FSIS has promised to achieve the following goals:

Small Businesses	55%
8(a) Businesses	15%
Minority Businesses	5%
Women-Owned Businesses	5%
HUBZone Business	1.5%
JWOD Businesses	1%

Your assistance with the achievement of these goals is appreciated and necessary for our success. You can help by looking for and recommending small business vendors on any applicable procurement requests. And by notifying the Contracting Office of any superior small business vendors with whom you have done business, we can pass along the good news. We also ask for your understanding if the Contracting Officer should change your recommended large business source to an alternate small business vendor. With your help, FSIS can meet its FY 2000 goals and keep its promise to our most important customers, the taxpayer.

Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program

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In last month's article on the Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP) we discussed VDIP and how it works. This month we would like to focus on the various types of intervention used in FSIS to resolve problems. All of these informal resolution methods are alternatives to the formal processes (EEO complaints, administrative and negotiated grievances) typically used to resolve disputes. Therefore, they are referred to collectively as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. We have identified the most commonly used ADR methods. A VDIP intervenor could use any of these methods to help resolve a conflict.

Mediation – Mediation is an informal process in which an impartial third party assists two or more individuals in finding a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict. Mediation is the method most frequently used in VDIP to resolve a conflict between employees.

The mediator does not review evidence or render a decision in the dispute. The parties themselves explain their positions on an issue, and they decide on any resolution. The mediator, who is trained in conflict resolution, simply helps the parties talk openly and frankly to each other. Mediation is voluntary and confidential.

Team Problem-Solving - Team Problem Solving (TPS) is a process that involves several employees at the same or various grade levels working together to solve a problem. Typically, a vertical slice of supervisory and non-supervisory employees participates in a TPS session. Some of the techniques used in TPS are the same as those used in mediation. However, TPS is not voluntary, nor is it confidential, unless the parties sign a confidentiality agreement. Usually, the following five-step approach is used in TPS:

1. Define the problem;
2. Identify the cause or causes;
3. Develop the solutions;
4. Prepare an action plan, and
5. Implement the action plan.

TPS is used primarily in the field components of Field Operations to (1) resolve conflicts or (2) establish or clarify standards, procedures, or policy. However, this approach has also been used successfully in headquarters.

Facilitation – This is a collaborative process that helps parties reach a decision or a satisfactory resolution of a matter. A facilitator, who is a neutral participant, generally helps to conduct meetings or coordinate discussions among participants at a meeting. The facilitator tries to keep the meeting on track and ensures that all of the participants are heard.

Conciliation – This is an informal process in which a third party tries to bring the disputants to agreement by lowering tensions, improving communications, interpreting issues, and providing technical assistance. Conciliation is frequently used in volatile situations and in disputes where the parties are unable, unwilling, or unprepared to come to the table in a face to face setting to discuss a problem with the other party(s). A conciliator meets with each party individually to explore potential solutions. Conciliation might ultimately lead to mediation or even a TPS session.

We hope the foregoing is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact VDIP on 1-800-860-VDIP (8347) or 612-370-2033 in Minneapolis or 202-205-0066 in DC.

SUPPLIES

Canadian Export Certificates (FSIS-9135-3) for Year 2000 Are In

by Pete Bridgeman
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The Year 2000 Edition of the FSIS 9135-3, Canadian Export Certificates, are now in stock in Landover. The unit of issue for this form is PKG25 (package of 25). All orders sent to Landover for these forms will now be filled with the "2000" version of the form. Please do not wait until late December to order these forms, when it becomes an emergency need. Order them now.

If you still have a need for more of the "1999" version of the form, just call the Supply Hot Line at 1-800-714-8335 to order, and specify that you need the 1999 version of the form. These will become obsolete on January 1, 2000.

Questions and Answers

We're looking forward to a lot of improvements during FY2000, and as always, your feedback will help us to gauge how well we're accomplishing the goal. We welcome any questions you might have, and suggestions for ways to improve the FSIS Field Supply System. Our goal is to make this system as customer-friendly and easy to use as we can, within available resources. The following questions have come to us through a variety of means, from Customer Feedback Forms to Supply Hotline calls, Speed Memo's and e-mail.

Q: What alternatives do you have to the Latex Disposable Gloves for those of us who have allergies to latex?

A: We also carry Green Nitrile Gloves, which come in sizes 6 through 11, Item number FSIS-51-(Size - 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or 11), which many have found to be a reasonable alternative to the latex. We do not carry the vinyl because these had a tendency to fall apart very easily when used in the field, and this presented possible product contamination problems.

Q: Why doesn't the Lightweight Alternative Helmet (FSIS-61) come with "USDA" printed across the front like the regular hard-hat helmets (FSIS-04H)?

A: We looked into that, but due to the shape of the lightweight helmet in the front, they could not print the "USDA" on it. However, you can order the helmet decal, FSIS-04HDECAL, to affix to the front of the lightweight helmet.

Q: We want to comply with the requirement to separate our orders, but it gets confusing at times. How do we know whether an item is a "supply item" or a "specialty item" when you've issued it since the last printing of the catalog?

A: As a rule of thumb, if the Item Number begins with "FSIS-", it is a Specialty Item. If it is a numeric-only number, it is a Supply Item. (Note: See "Consolidation" article following the Questions and Answers for new information regarding separation of orders).

Q: In the April, '99 issue of the *Beacon*, you had an article about "Freezer Vests With Sleeves". In it, you said that you were looking into the feasibility of adding these as a stock item in FY 2000. Are you still thinking about adding these to your inventory, and if so, when will they become available?

A: Based on the enthusiastic feedback received from many inspectors in the field, we plan to add these to our inventory. We expect to have them in stock by the end of November and will publish the Item Numbers in the December issue of the *Beacon*. Instead of calling them "Freezer Vests with Sleeves", we plan to call them "Freezer Jackets".

Q: When will you start issuing the 33 cent stamps?

A: Up until recently, the U.S. Postal Service was not planning to print any Official Use U.S. Postage Stamps in the 33 cent denomination, but they apparently listened to the voice of reason and now do plan to print them. We hope to have some available later during 2000. We will publish the item number when we get them into stock. Until then, we will keep plenty of 32 cent, 1 cent, 23 cent, and 10 cent stamps on hand for use until the 33 cent stamps arrive. Please do not order 33 cent stamps until we indicate that we have them available.

Q: Would it be possible to supply a CD Storage Rack, preferably desk-top, freestanding, to our available items? We are accumulating a lot of CD's out in the field and proper storage of them is desirable.

A: All computer-related items provided to the field are funded by FAIM. FAIM has indicated to us that all CD's sent out to field FAIM users are sent in their own individual case, and that these cases can easily be stored together by stacking or holding together with a rubber band. So, we will not be providing CD storage racks at this time.

Q: You used to carry a shipping box, Item Number 5545, that came in a bundle of 25, size 6-3/4" x 6-3/4" x 7-1/2". This wasn't listed in the April '98 Catalog - can we still get these?

A: Yes, that was an inadvertent omission on our part when the catalog was re-issued. We still carry those boxes, the Item Number is still 5545, the Unit of Issue is BD (Bundle of 25), and this is considered a Supply Item.

Q: Why doesn't Landover accept faxed orders? It would really help speed up the process if we could just fax our orders in.

A: Each order form, CFPDC-1, has a unique number, which is the order number. This number is used to track the order through the system. In order to avoid any potential confusion from a customer using a copy of the same order form more than once, Landover requires the original form. One of the improvements we're working on is to make electronic ordering available to field FAIM users. We expected to have this option available by now, but Y2K compliance considerations took priority over this. Now that the system at Landover has been made Y2K compliant, they are working on upgrading the system to make electronic ordering available. We are ready to take whatever steps are necessary from our end to achieve this goal for our field customers. This would cut out the time it takes for your order to get to Landover through the mail and get manually input into the system.

Q: I'm a Relief Inspector, and maintaining an adequate supply of forms, supplies, and specialty items that I need to do my job is very difficult at times. I don't want to raid the locker at a plant I'm covering, but sometimes I don't get back to my Headquarter plant for weeks at a time. What can I do?

A: We're more than happy to set up a separate account for Relief Inspectors. We just need your name, the address you want your supplies to be shipped to, and a phone number. We'll set the account up and send you a Welcome Kit to get you started. You may either send this information to us at the address listed above, call the toll free Supply Hot Line (1-800-714-8335) with the information, or fax it to 301-504-4231, whichever is more convenient for you. Sending an e-mail to me with the information will also work.

Consolidation of Forms, Specialty Items and Supplies

We just got word from Landover about an exciting new development there that is going to simplify the supply ordering and order receiving process for our field customers. The Central Supply Stores operation (where the office-type supplies are handled) has been moved into the same warehouse as the Forms and Specialty Items, and they are currently working on consolidating all of FSIS' Forms, Specialty Items and Supplies into one area, under one system. As orders get filled, the entire order will be shipped out together, including supply items. Their target date for having this consolidation completed is October 27, 1999. If all goes well with it, we will be happy to announce in next month's *Beacon* that you no longer have to separate your orders! You'll be able to put everything on one CFPDC-1 Order Form, and receive it all together as one order. Watch next month's *Beacon* for this announcement.

VEHICLES

U.S. Government Fleet Services Credit Card
by Brian McNiff
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Under the Voyager “U.S. Government Fleet Services” credit card, GSA has the ability to review all purchases charged to each individual vehicle. The Fleet Management Centers are in the process of forwarding reports to our office for the period of January 1, 1999 through July 31, 1999 showing credit card purchases that appear on the report as “questionable”. Our agency has been asked to provide documentation to support the validity of these purchases. In most cases, purchases listed as non-fuel have been found to be vehicle related and authorized purchases. In order to provide the required response to these reports, several drivers of government vehicles may receive letters asking for justification for specific purchases. In the past, drivers of government vehicles have not been required to save receipts of their credit card purchases, and we understand in many cases it will not be possible to identify purchases over a six month period. In order that all future purchases can be justified, we are requesting all drivers to retain copies of all receipts charged on their Fleet Services Card, or simply maintain a log of all purchases for a six moth period. I am working with the Fleet Managers to provide future reports that will specifically identify purchases that are non-vehicle related.

In an effort to comply with the Federal Regulations governing the proper use of the Government Fleet Services Card, GSA has asked us to remind all drivers that this card can only be used for vehicle related purchases. These purchases include the following services:

- Gasoline and oil. Unless otherwise instructed, only regular unleaded gasoline is authorized for use in all government vehicles.
- Oil, lubrication, and filter changes.
- Tire repair, but does not authorize tire purchase without prior approval of the FMC.
- All minor emergency repairs costing less than $100.00.
- Car washes. Car washes are limited to two per month. Additional car washes, detailing, or waxing must be authorized by your servicing FMC. The primary source for car washes is service stations that offer free or reduced cost car washes with a “fill up”.

Operators are responsible for safeguarding and controlling their assigned credit card at all times. The credit card should never be left in an unlocked vehicle. If the credit card is lost or stolen the servicing FMC should be notified immediately by telephone and then in writing. Your letter should contain the following information.

- Tag number of the vehicle for which the credit card was issued.
- The date and location where the credit card was last seen.
- The location where the credit card was used last.
- The steps you took to recover the lost or stolen card.

If you have any questions or need assistance on any vehicle issues, please call me at the above phone number.

TRAVEL

Temporary Duty Assignment
by Barbara McNiff
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Editor's Note: Saeed Qureshi, an FSIS Supervisory Veterinarian Medical Officer in Norcross, GA, submitted the following question.

Q: If a relief veterinarian travels to a temporary duty (TDY) site which is 70 miles from his/her headquarters plant and 31 miles from his/her residence, can the employee stay overnight in a motel?

A: Like most questions involving payment of travel expenses, the answer is – "It Depends." First, in order to receive payment of *any* per diem, the employee must be in travel status for more than 12 hours. Thus, if the employee was able to travel to the TDY site, perform his/her assignment and return within 12 hours, regardless of the mileage distance from the residence or headquarters point, then the employee is not entitled to any per diem.

In order for an employee to be eligible for overnight lodging reimbursement, the employee must be in travel status for more than 12 hours *and* the temporary duty site must be outside a 35 mile radius of the headquarters plant.

Computation for per diem begins when the employee leaves either the residence or the official duty station and ends when the employee returns to the residence or official duty station. Therefore, if an employee, whose TDY site was 71 miles from the headquarters plant, but only 31 miles from the residence, began and ended the travel from his residence, he/she might not be entitled to per diem because they may not have been in travel status for more than 12 hours.

Changes in Per Diem Rates
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Effective August 19, 1999 the General Services Administration (GSA) has made additional changes in the per diem rates that were initially effective on January 1, 1999. Attachment 1 provides a copy of these changes. These changes need to be incorporated into your PC-TRAV program. Obtain these amendments by accessing this web site address:

http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/perd99chgs.htm.

FSIS Directive 3800.1 will be amended to incorporate all changes.

ISSUANCES

Electronic Issuances
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Agency issuances are available to employees in Microsoft's Exchange mail system, Outlook. Recently issued administrative and program directives and notices are in the public folder entitled Agency Issuances.

There are three subfolders in the Agency Issuances public folder. These three subfolders are entitled, Directives, Index and Checklists, and Notices. The Index and Checklists subfolder contains the annual FSIS Directives Numeric and Subject Index and quarterly checklists that supplement the Index.

All of the issuances in the public folder are Word 97 files and some are Adobe (.pdf) files. You may view the Adobe files by downloading the free Adobe Reader available in the Adobe internet site:

http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html.

Most of the issuances contain the official Issuance System masthead, signatures, graphics, and attachments. Some of the attachments are in separate files so that file sizes are minimal. Several files contain links to attachments. Format and content of the issuances replicate the paper copy.

Field employees, at this time, may access PcDials to view issuances. PcDials is stored locally on their computers. These employees must run an update procedure within Opendesk (HpDesk) to maintain their PcDials databases.

Distribution of Issuances
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Agency issuances (directives, notices, and checklists) are distributed to various units in the Agency. The Office of Primary Interest identifies the audience. (EXAMPLE: Who needs to carry out an action or who needs knowledge of the matter.) The distribution is then tailored to fit the audience.

Each issuance has a distribution statement on the lower left corner of the first page. Frequently used distribution statements are found on the inside front cover of the FSIS Directives Numeric and Subject Index and in FSIS Directive 2610.1, FSIS Issuance System. An example of a frequently used distribution statement is “All Offices”. This statement ensures that each addressee receives one or more “office/file” copies. An “All Offices” distribution statement is sent to the following units:

- Washington Headquarters Offices (i.e., Office of Administrator, Deputy Administrators, Staff Offices, and Division Directors)
- Financial Processing Center
- Human Resources Field Office (Minneapolis, MN)
- Circuit Supervisors
- District Offices
- Egg Products Inspectors
- Headquarters Plants (IIC’s)
- Import Facility Inspectors (IFI)
- Technical Service Center
- Field Service Laboratories

If we change the distribution statement to “All Employees,” additional copies are sent to the above addresses to provide a copy for each employee at the address.

Addresses for each distribution unit are stored in a database called “CORE”. The Printing and Distribution Section (PDS), Paperwork Management Branch (PMB), Administrative Services Division, uses CORE to generate address labels. The District Office (DO) updates addresses at and below the DO level. All other offices should contact PDS to update their addresses.

The Directives Management Section, PMB, publishes an FSIS Checklist each calendar year quarter. The checklist contains issuances published or cancelled during the quarter. If your office was listed in the distribution statement for an issuance and you did not receive the issuance(s), verify that your address is correct in the “CORE” system and order replacement copies from:

USDA FSIS OM ASD PMB
PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION SECTION
MAILDROP 5241
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE
BELTSVILLE, MD 20705-5241

Issuances are also available electronically. See the previous article entitled “Electronic Issuances.”

For additional information on the distribution or non-receipt of issuances, contact PDS on 301-504-4242.

Recent Agency Issuances
by Mary Wissman
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4233

The following notices and directives have been issued since the September 1999 edition of the *Beacon*. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the “PCDIALS" library in Opendesk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Notice 29-99 (8/25/99)
Time and Attendance (T&A) Reporting Procedures for Pay Period 20

Notice 30-99 (8/26/99)
Reporting Fiscal Year 1999 Yearend Transactions

Directive 9000.1 (9/9/99)
Export Certification

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from the Printing and Distribution Section's address provided in the previous article.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Applying for Inspector Vacancies

Applying for internal vacancies can be confusing process as there are several ways to receive consideration. In response to a request by the National Joint Council, an article is now available that outlines the procedures for applying for reassignment and also for recurring and announced vacancies. This article is published in Attachment 2 to this issue of the *Beacon.* It can also be found electronically on the Exchange mail system (Outlook) by accessing these Public Folders:

+ All Public Folders
    + Personnel
        + Biweekly Vacancy Listing

For employees who do not yet have access to Outlook, it can be found on Hpdesk in the Library and is posted under “Field Vacancies.” If you have any further questions about applying for internal Inspector vacancies, you may call the Internal Placement Section at 1-800-370-3747.

Reimbursements for Jury Duty

This guidance clarifies the rules for when it is appropriate to retain fees or other reimbursements for time spent performing jury or witness service or travel or incidentals in connection with jury or witness service. Each court system, depending on its jurisdiction and location, handles court fees and reimbursements a little differently, so it is important to first distinguish between the types of reimbursements. Most often, the reimbursement is intended to pay a person for travel or other incidental expenses incurred. In other instances, it may be intended to compensate the person for time spent away from his/her regular job. Often, the court documentation that an employee receives after being released from the jury/witness service does not state the purpose of the fee or reimbursement. When that happens, it is incumbent upon the employee to clarify with the court the intended purpose(s) of the reimbursement, in order to determine if it is appropriate for the employee to retain the reimbursement.

Types of Reimbursements

1. Reimbursement for time spent performing jury or witness service.

a. The employee may retain the reimbursements when:

- He/she uses annual leave or leave without pay (LWOP) to testify in a *nonofficial capacity* on *behalf of a private party*; or
- He/she is an intermittent employee or he/she is in an LWOP status when called for jury duty, since he/she is not eligible for court leave; or
- The reimbursement is greater than the employee's pay from FSIS for the period of jury/witness service, in which case, he/she may keep the excess amount; or
- He/she performs jury/witness service on a day on which the employee is not scheduled to work or on a holiday when the employee is excused from work; or
- He/she performs jury/witness service in a *nonofficial capacity* on a workday but outside of his/her scheduled tour of duty. For example, if an employee is scheduled to work from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and he/she performs jury duty from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., the employee may retain a portion of the fee covering the time period from 4:30 pm to 6 pm. In order to determine the portion of the fee that may be retained, the fee must be prorated as described below.

Prorating the Jury/Witness Reimbursement:

- First, divide the daily jury/witness fee by the number of hours the employee normally works on a given day.
- Next, multiply the number of hours of jury/witness service performed outside of the regularly scheduled workday. This calculation gives the dollar amount that the employee may actually retain for jury/witness service for that day. Note: In doing the calculation, thirty minutes or more of jury/witness service is treated as one hour. Periods of less than 30 minutes are disregarded.

b. The employee may *not* retain the reimbursements when:

- He/she is granted official court leave (i.e., administrative leave/excused absence - transaction code 66) since he/she is paid his/her regular salary for the absence.
- He/she is performing jury/witness service in an *official capacity* and he/she is paid overtime pay for jury/witness service performed beyond his/her scheduled tour of duty. For example, if an employee works 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and he/she performs jury/witness service until 5:30 p.m. The employee would be paid for his/her regular salary for the hours of the tour of duty plus 2 hours of overtime pay from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Therefore, any reimbursements received for that day may not be retained.

2. Reimbursement for Travel and Incidental Expenses

a. The employee may retain the reimbursements when:

- He/she is *not* eligible for Agency reimbursement of travel expenses; *and*
- The jury/witness certificate given to the employee by the court states that the fee or a portion of the fee is specifically for travel or incidental expenses. (Note: The certificate must designate the purpose of the reimbursement); *or*
- He/she performs jury/witness service in the State of Georgia or in Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Prince George's, and Montgomery. (Note: The state or jurisdiction considers the flat fee as reimbursement for travel or incidental purposes not for time spent performing jury/witness service.)

b. The employee may *not* retain the reimbursements when:

- An employee is authorized to make a court appearance while on *official duty* and he/she is reimbursed for travel or incidental expenses by FSIS. Payment of travel expenses must be consistent with Agency and Federal travel regulations; or
- The jury/witness certificate does not specify the purpose of the fee and the employee does not or cannot get clarification from the court.

Disposition of Reimbursements:

FSIS Directive 4630.3, Witnesses In Judicial Proceedings explains the procedures for remitting fees/reimbursements to FSIS. Employees receiving reimbursements that must be remitted to FSIS should sign and cash the checks. They should then obtain a check or money order in the same amount of the fee/reimbursement, endorse it to the United States Department of Treasury, and submit it as follows:

Field Employees: submit the check or money order to the appropriate district office;

Other Employees: submit the check or money order to their immediate supervisor.

The check should then be forwarded by the official to:

Accounting Operations and Systems Branch
Financial Management Division
Office of Management
Room 2139 - South Building
14th and Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Questions may be directed to the Classification and Compensation Branch, Human Resources Division at 202-720-6287.

Leave Transfer Recipients

1. Martha Stamps
   FO, AR; Serious Illness
2. Jackie Copeland
   FO, DC; Illness
3. Annie Stewart
   POB, MN; Serious Illness
4. Kasturi Basu
   FO, DC; Surgery
5. Linda Cole
   OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness
6. Sonya West
   OPPDE, DC; Maternity
7. Joyce Schultz
   POB, MN; Serious Illness
8. FO-98-0031*
   FO, AR; Serious Illness
9. Stephanie Showell
   FO, DE; Family Illness
10. Michael Schwochert
    FO, CO; Surgery
11. Willia Stepney
    OM, DC; Maternity
12. Michelle Carpenter
    FO, OH; Complications w/pregnancy
13. Linda Carey
    EMS, DC; Surgery
14. Gary Fetters
    FO, IA; Serious Illness
15. Nancy Clyburn
    OPHS, DC; Surgery
16. FO-99-0007*
    FO, SC; Serious Illness
17. George Olson
    FO, MN; Family Illness
18. Kellie Upshaw
    EMS, DC; Maternity
19. Traci Edmond
    EMS, DC; Maternity
20. Mary Sutton
    OPHS, GA; Complications w/pregnancy
21. FO-99-0010*
    FO, NC; Surgery
22. Cheryl Evans
    FO, AR; Surgery
23. Octavia Thomas
    FO, GA; Complications w/pregnancy
24. Mose Tyler
    FO, CA; Surgery
25. Cynthia Dixon
    OM, DC; Illness
26. FO-99-0017*
    FO, OH; Surgery
27. Marilyn Weber
    FPC, IA; Illness
28. Robert Martz
    FO, IA; Serious Illness
29. Alma Lindsey
    FO, IL; Illness
30. Joseph Banales
    FO, CA; Illness
31. Lorraine Kauffman
    OM, DC; Maternity
32. Charles Olson
    FO, WI; Serious Illness
33. Betty Morgan
    FO, AR; Family Illness
34. Carolyn Woolfolk
    FO, DC; Surgery
35. Donna Ogdahl
    FO, MN; Surgery
36. Dorothy Fanick
    FO, TX, Serious Illness
37. FO-99-0027
    FO, NC, Surgery
38. Carol Leonard
    OM, IA; serious Illness
39. Theresa Spoering
    FO, MN; Surgery
40. FO-99-0033
    FO, TX
41. FO-99-0034
    FO, SD; Family Illness
42. Karen Wratchford
    FO, KY; Surgery
43. Maureen Murphy
    FO, OK; Surgery
44. Tammy Love
    FO, AR; Surgery
45. Steve Engels
    FO, IA; Serious Illness
46. Sue Engels
    FO, IA; Family Illness
47. Michael Craig
    FO, NE; Family Illness
48. Nicole Wareham
    FO, IN; Maternity
49. Michelle Long
    OM, DC; Surgery

*While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-720-6287.

Leave Transfer Program Note:

Attachment 3 to this edition of the Beacon *is a copy of the Leave Donor Application (Form AD 4630-1) for your convenience for those that choose to donate annual leave. This will save you the hassle of locating a form. The completed form should be mailed or faxed to the appropriate HRD office as shown in the following article.*

Donating "Use or Lose" Annual Leave

Employees with "use or lose" leave that might otherwise be forfeited may choose to donate this leave to an eligible leave recipient under the Leave Transfer Program (LTP). Interested employees should complete the Form AD-1043, Leave Transfer Program-Donor Application and submit it to one of the Human Resources Division (HRD) offices identified below. Leave donor forms must be received *on or before December 23, 1999*, in order to allow sufficient time for processing before the end of the 1999 leave year. Use or lose leave donations received after this date will be returned to the donors and the leave is subject to forfeiture if not used.

Employees may donate up to the number of hours remaining in the leave year for which they are scheduled to work and receive pay, not including time on leave or holidays. EXAMPLE: If an employee wants to donate 80 hours of use/lose leave effective Pay Period 26, and during that pay period there is one 8-hour holiday and the employee takes 8 hours of sick leave, the employee can donate a maximum amount of 64 hours of annual leave (i.e. 80 hours minus 16 hours = 64 hours). See FSIS Directive 4630.5., Part III - Leave Donors.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the appropriate HRD office below.

For Field Employees:

Mary Davis, Donor Coordinator
Benefits and Field Classification and Compensation Branch
Butler Square West, 4th Floor
100 N. Sixth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Tel: 612-370-2000
Fax: 612-370-2013
e-mail: mary.davis@usda.gov

For Headquarters Employees:

Carian Young, Donor Coordinator
Classification and Compensation Branch
Room 3162 – South Building
14th and Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250
Tel: 202-720-6287
Fax: 202-720-9850
e-mail: carian.young@usda.gov

Elder Care

Everyone is more aware with the Aging of America, people are living longer but requiring more care and assistance. More adult children are involved in their parents' care than ever before in history. Also, because the Federal workforce has a high median age, most employees either currently are or soon will be involved in some aspect of their parents' care. (The average American spends 18 years caring for their aging parents.)

HRD, in a previous issue of the newsletter, informed employees about the Office of Personnel Management's "Handbook of Child and Elder Care" that provides useful information that can used by employees in dealing with concerns related to the elder care of friends, parents, siblings or other relations. The Handook lists a range of references that are offered in many communities to help older adults function independently, a discussion of housing options available to older adults, information on legal, financial and health considerations for older adults; and a discussion on taking care of the caregiver.

The Handbook is being offered again in conjunction with a recent OPM satellite broadcast on "Dependent Elder Care", held on September 22 in Washington, DC. Locations with satellite downlink access were able to view the broad cast and hear about scheduling flexibilities, information resources and support networks that are needed to assist employees. Many of our employees were unable to view the broadcast; however, we wanted to let you know much of the information provided during the broadcast is available in the handbook.

Also, employees are encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-523-5668 if you are having problems regarding elder care. Your EAP Elder Care program can help you deal with issues concerning every aspect of care for the elderly. Also, you may call the nationwide "Elder Care Locator" number sponsored by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging at 1-800-617-1116. They will be able to provide assistance on other resources related to this subject.

To request OPM's Handbook on "Child and Elder Care" referred to above, please contact the Performance, Evaluation and Recognition Branch by telephone on 202-720-7983, submit a written request to PERB, Room 3817 So. Bldg., 14th and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC, 20250, send a fax to 202-690-2773 or an electronic mail message to pat.forslind@usda.gov.

GS-696 & GS-1382 Educational Requirements

The Human Resources Field Office (HRFO) has observed the recent swell of interest in continuing education from employees who want to make sure that they are adequately prepared for the continually evolving nature of the work performed by the Agency. In recognition of this and in order to provide more effective service, HRFO wants to provide guidance on how employees may seek to improve their qualifications. Additionally, HRFO feels that this is a good opportunity to make some appropriate changes in how we respond to requests for guidance on continuing education.

In the past, employees relied on the GS-1382, Food Technologist, educational evaluations to plan continuing education. The Administrator's letter to all employees of July 6, 1999, indicated that the GS-696, Consumer Safety Officer, series will figure prominently in the workforce of the future. Within the context of comparing the educational requirements of GS-1382 and GS-696, this is good news for FSIS employees. The educational requirements for GS-696 are much broader than those for GS-1382. Qualifying coursework for GS-696 includes biological science, animal science, food science or technology, nutrition, veterinary medicine, medicine, chemistry, pharmacy, microbiology, epidemiology, and other related fields. Thus, the Consumer Safety Officer series can be viewed as an inter-disciplinary professional occupation that draws on many areas of expertise to fulfill a regulatory enforcement role.

As a extension to the introduction of GS-696, the Human Resources Field Office will no longer be evaluating whether individuals meet the educational requirements for the GS-1382, Food Technologist, series in advance of a specific vacancy. HRFO expects that as time goes on there will be fewer and fewer positions announced in the GS-1382 series. Thus, the wide scale evaluation of Food Technologist qualifications makes less sense now than it did in the past. HRFO will evaluate Food Technologist qualifications only in conjunction with vacancy announcements.

Given the broader nature of the GS-696 educational requirements, employees will in most cases be able to determine if their previous or planned education meets the requirements. Employees need only ensure that they have 30 semester hours in applicable subjects and that the courses are from an accredited college or university (note: applicants without specialized experience must have a degree). An examination of specific course content, as was necessary with GS-1382, is not required. HRFO will be able to assist individuals by outlining the general requirements and assessing whether a subject not listed above is in a related field.

As always, HRFO is here to receive your questions or concerns at 1-800-370-3747—ask for the Staffing Coordinator who handles your district.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Eye Strain

by Tom Wright
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4246

With the increase in computer use at work and at home, complaints of eye fatigue and discomfort are common. Many people assume the computer is the problem. But government tests and private research have failed to produce scientific evidence that computers harm the eyes.

According to Prevent Blindness America, an existing eye problem can also cause symptoms of eyestrain and fatigue. Before blaming the computer, schedule an examination with an eye doctor. You may need glasses to correct the problem.

Here are six steps to help make your workstation more comfortable for your eyes:

1. Use an adjustable chair. This allows you to position yourself at a proper angle and distance from the monitor.
2. Place the computer screen 20 to 26 inches from your eyes and slightly below eye level.
3. Place reference material on a document holder close enough to the screen to avoid swinging the head back and forth between the material and the screen.
4. Modify the lighting to eliminate glare and reflections.
5. Take frequent breaks to stretch your muscles and rest your eyes.
6. Blink rapidly once in a while to keep your eyes from drying out.

For more information on how to make your workstation more comfortable for your eyes, call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit their worksite at www.preventblindness.org.

Fire Prevention Week

by Harry Thompson
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 214-767-9124, x-896

The history on National Fire Prevention week has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred on October 9, 1871. This tragic fire killed some 300 people, left 100,000 homeless, and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. The origin of the fire has generated speculation since its occurrence, with fact and fiction becoming blurred over the years. One popular legend has it that Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking her cow when the animal kicked over a lamp, setting O'Leary's barn on fire and starting the spectacular blaze. However the massive fire began, it swiftly took its toll, burning more than 2,000 acres in 27 hours. The City of Chicago quickly rebuilt and within a couple of years residents began celebrating their successful restoration by memorializing the anniversary of the fire with festivities.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first national Fire Prevention Day Proclamation. Every year since 1927, the President of the United States has signed a proclamation pronouncing the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9 falls a national observance.

Tips To Treat Burns:

What you should do for a burn in the first few minutes after it occurs can make a difference in how bad the injury will be.

1. Stop the burning process—remove the source of heat. If clothing catches fire, “Stop, Drop, and Roll” to smother the flames.
2. Remove all burned clothing—Clothing may retain heat and cause a deep injury. If clothing sticks to the skin, cut or tear around area to save good skin.
3. Pour cool water over the burned area. Keep pouring the cool water for at least 3-5 minutes (30-40 minutes for chemical injury).
4. Remove all jewelry, belts, tight clothing, etc. from over the burned areas and around the victim’s neck. Burned areas start swelling immediately.
5. Do not apply ointments or butter to wounds. These may cause infection due to their oil base and convert wounds to deeper injury.
6. Cover burns with a soft, clean, dry dressing, bandage, or sheet
7. Keep the victim warm.
8. Seek medical attention as soon as possible if the size of the burn is larger than a dollar bill.

INTERNAL CONTROLS

What are Management Controls?
by Michael Thaggard
Internal Control Staff
Telephone: 202-690-5645

One of the functions of the Internal Control Staff (ICS) is to independently and objectively assess the effectiveness of the Agency's management control system. Essential to this responsibility is the need to make everyone aware of their management control obligations. Management controls are normally thought of as something of concern only to the Internal Control Staff and senior managers. However, any program area that authorizes the use of resources, has control of assets, and provides information for the accounting records need to be concerned with management controls. Managers of program areas must understand the importance of management controls, the risks in circumventing the controls and the ramifications of abusing controls. All employees must also recognize that they are vital elements of the management control system. This leads to the all important question, "What are management controls?"

Management controls, sometimes referred to as internal controls, are systems and procedures that are used to detect or prevent errors of commission and omission. They safeguard the Agency's assets, which include accurate financial records and help to prevent or mitigate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. Management controls also promote operational efficiency and encourage adherence to prescribed policies and standards. Effective management control is a cornerstone of successful management.

A more formal definition is that management control comprises the set of activities and procedures the Agency follows and all of the coordinate methods and measures adopted within the Agency to safeguard its assets, check the accuracy and reliability of its accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to good management practices, prescribed managerial policies and applicable laws. Management control encompasses controls that may be characterized as either accounting or administrative processes or procedures. Accounting controls pertain to procedures which ensure that assets are protected and that financial records are accurate and reliable. Administrative controls comprise the Agency's methods concerned with operational efficiency and adherence to sound management practices, managerial policies, and applicable laws.

Management controls are detective, corrective, or preventive by nature. Detective controls are designed to detect errors or irregularities that may have occurred. Corrective controls are designed to correct errors or irregularities that have been detected. Preventive controls, on the other hand, are designed to keep errors or irregularities from occurring in the first place.

In general, management control consists of five interrelated components: the control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communications, and monitoring. Each of these components is an integral part of the management process and plays a specific role in the management control procedures of the programs.

Control Environment - the control environment sets the tone for the program, influencing the control consciousness of its people. It is the foundation for all other components of management control, providing discipline and structure. Control environment factors include the integrity, ethical values, and competence of the program's employees; management's philosophy and operating style; and the way management assigns authority and responsibility, and organizes its resources.

Risk Assessment - every program area faces a variety of risks from external and management sources that must be assessed. Risk assessment is the identification and analysis of relevant risks to the achievement of established objectives. Key activities and their risks must be assessed and prioritized so that managers can manage the risks they need to take and avoid those risks which are not necessary.

Information and Communication - pertinent information must be identified, captured, and communicated in a form and time frame that enables people to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Information systems produce reports containing operational, financial, and compliance related information that assists each program area.

Effective communication also must occur in a broader sense, flowing down, across, and up the organizational structure. All personnel must understand their role in the management control system, as well as how Agency activities are interdependent on each other. They must have a means of communicating significant information upstream.

Monitoring - management control systems need to be monitored. Monitoring is a process that assesses the quality of the system's performance over time. This is accomplished through ongoing monitoring activities carried out primarily by line program managers. The Internal Control Staff provides an objective and independent perspective of the monitored activities and information. Management control deficiencies noted by employees should be reported first to line management, with chronic and egregious matters being reported to the Internal Control Staff or the OIG Whistleblower Hotline at:

Washington Metropolitan Area: 202-690-1622
Toll Free: 800-424-9121
TDD: 202-690-1202

The Internal Control Staff has prepared a draft "*Management Plan/Program Guide*" document to communicate the methods and activities for achieving a sound management control program within the Agency. The draft report will be circulated for peer review and comment. The final " *Management Plan/Program Guide*" will serve as a tool to guide and help ensure that the Internal Control Staff activities provide visibility of the Agency's management controls and their effectiveness.

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:

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Printed on recycled paper with at least 20 percent post-consumer content.

ATTACHMENT 1

Changes to 1999 Per Diem Rates
Effective January 1, 1999
(Changes are in **Bold**)

State	Key City/ County	From	To	Lodging	M&IE	Total
CA	**Orange County**			95	46	141
CA	San Diego			**96**	46	**142**
CA	San Luis Obispo	6/1	9/30	**79**	38	**117**
		10/1	5/31	**69**	38	**107**
IL	Chicago			**109**	46	**155**
IL	Cook			**109**	46	**155**
NJ	**Belle Mead**			**129**	38	**167**
NJ	**Somerset**			**129**	38	**167**
NC	**Durham**			**85**	42	**127**
NC	**Research Triangle Park**			**85**	42	**127**
UT	**Layton**			**69**	34	**103**
UT	**Ogden**			**69**	34	**103**
UT	**Davis and Weber**			**69**	34	**103**
VA	Loudoun County			**102**	38	**140**
VA	Loudoun			**102**	38	**140**

ATTACHMENT 2

APPLYING FOR INSPECTOR VACANCIES

In an effort to promote greater understanding on how Inspector vacancies are filled, we would like to outline the three procedures available for use which include reassignment, recurring vacancies and announced vacancies. For your convenience we have summarized the application process for these three systems in a question and answer format listed below. Applications should be sent to Field Employment Services Branch (FESB) in Minneapolis.

HOW POSITIONS ARE FILLED: The Field Employment Services Branch does not decide when or how a vacant position will be filled. The District Office will initiate action to staff positions. For vacant Inspector positions, the reassignment list will be requested first. If no selection is made from the reassignment list, the District can request a recurring vacancy promotion certificate (if covered by the recurring system). If the Selecting Official does not make a selection from the recurring promotion certificate due to insufficient candidates or a position is not covered by the Recurring System, the District can request that the position be announced through Merit Promotion. If you have questions about internal staffing, feel free to call the Internal Placement Section at 1-800-370-3747.

REASSIGNMENT SYSTEM

Am I eligible?

- To be eligible to apply for the Voluntary Reassignment System, you must be at your current duty station for one year as a full-time Inspector (Intermittent Inspectors are not eligible). **Involuntary** reassignments in a work reduction, a change in duty station due to rotation, or other actions not initiated by the employee do **not** begin a new one-year duty station requirement.
- The following actions require you to wait one year before applying to the Voluntary Reassignment System - promotions (except career ladder promotions) and voluntary lateral reassignments.
- If you took a demotion and now want to be repromoted back to the **higher** grade, you do not have to compete for promotion. Instead, you must submit a request through the lateral reassignment system.
- Any relocation based on the voluntary reassignment procedures for the benefit of the employee is expected to be at the expense of the employee. The appropriate manager can authorize a government paid expense when the reassignment is determined to be in the best interest of the Agency.

How do I apply?

- Submit the Employee Request for Reassignment Within Field Operations Form 4335-3. Locations are requested by city-state, county-state or state. If possible, you should submit the most recent form (dated 11/96), as a Conflict of Interest (COI) form is not needed if there is no conflict. If submitting the older form 4335-3 (dated 1/91), you are also required to include a COI Form 4735-2.
- Lateral Reassignment Request Forms must be received by mail, as an original signature is needed, and the control (application) date is determined by date-stamping the request when it arrives in FESB.
- Make sure all the blocks on Form 4335-3 are filled in except for blocks 11a-c. Fill in these blocks **only** if you were involved in a work reduction and have return rights.
- Specify your lateral reassignment locations by city-state, county-state or statewide. Up to 10 locations can be requested. Submit another Reassignment Form if you wish to delete or add locations at a later time.

REASSIGNMENT SYSTEM - How do I apply? (Continued)

- If a requested location expires, a new request must be received for that location and a new control date will be established. Any other request on file that has not expired will keep the original control date. Any requests for new locations will also receive a new control date (without effecting the dates of those currently on file).

- Requests are accepted for positions in the same duty station and control dates will be assigned, e.g., different plants in the same duty station. However, any past local practice will determine how reassignments are handled for reassignments within the same duty station.

- Lateral reassignment candidates are referred by grade level for the city and state where the vacancy occurs. Applications are not processed for type of job or specific establishments.

- If you are approaching your one-year in duty station requirement, you may submit your request up to 60 days before your one-year anniversary. Your request will become active when your one-year at duty station requirement is met.

How do I keep my application active?

- Lateral reassignment applications are active for one year. To keep your application active, you must renew your application by sending in another lateral reassignment form before the expiration date. Renewals will be accepted up to 60 days before the expiration date.

- When you are initially entered in the lateral reassignment system, or whenever you make changes to your records, you will be sent an acknowledgement letter. Please keep this as a record of your expiration dates as further notices will not be sent.

- If you receive a voluntary lateral reassignment or promotion, you must re-submit another lateral reassignment request when eligible if you are interested in another voluntary lateral reassignment.

RECURRING VACANCIES

The following grade, type of positions and their standard jobs are currently filled through the recurring vacancy system, 8NP(SJ-5), 8NP/P(SJ-466), 8P(SJ-6), 8TQC(SJ-465), 9NP(SJ-9), 9NP/P(SJ-18, 470), 9P(SJ-19,10), 9TQC(SJ-463, 464), 10TQC(SJ-462), and 11TQC(SJ-460). If a standard job to be filled is not covered by the recurring vacancy system or if the selecting official decides not to use the recurring promotion certificate due to insufficient candidates, the vacancy can be advertised through a vacancy announcement.

RECURRING VACANCIES - Am I eligible?

- To be eligible for promotion to GS-8 through GS-11 recurring vacancies, you must have one year of specialized experience at the next lower level, i.e., one year as a GS-7 Inspector to apply for GS-8 positions. Inspector positions at GS-10 and above require one year of processing experience at the next lower level, i.e., one year experience as a GS-9 Processing Inspector to apply for GS-10 positions.

- You can submit your recurring application up to 60 days before you are eligible for promotion, but you must have met all your eligibility requirements within 30 days of the cut-off date (first of every month) before you receive consideration or are referred to the promotion panel (usually meets the third week of every month).

- You cannot apply for promotion through the recurring system to a grade that you have previously held on a permanent basis. Since you have already competed for and held that grade level, you must request consideration through the Voluntary Reassignment System (see MOU #3).

RECURRING VACANCIES - How do I apply? (Continued)

RECURRING VACANCIES - How do I apply?

- You may submit your application by using FSIS Form 4335-1 or you may use another format as long as it contains all of the information contained on the original form. One application must be submitted for each type of position (i.e., P, NP, P/NP) that you wish to receive consideration.
- Submit your most recent performance rating (not more than 15 months old) with the application. If you have not received a rating within the last 15 months, include a written explanation along with the last rating you received.
- When replying to job elements, be sure to limit your response for each element to two pages or less. Information in excess of two pages will not be referred to the promotion panel. Include your name on the first page (this is removed before submittal to the promotion review panel) and write your social security number in the upper right hand corner. When responding to elements, avoid reference to supervisor names and establishment numbers.
- List your geographic preferences by Region, Zone and/or Subzone (depending on how large a geographic area you wish to receive consideration). Zones can be found in FSIS Directive 4335-6.

❖ ***Note:*** The standard jobs covered in the recurring system may not remain the same as changes occur in the Agency. If there are changes that affect the procedures for applying to the recurring system, we will notify you in writing of the changes and if any application actions are required on your part.

How do I keep my application active?

- Applications are valid for five years, provided applicants maintain their eligibility by annually submitting their latest performance appraisal (must be dated within the last 15 months).
- You must resubmit a new application if FESB does not receive your appraisal by the expiration date.
- If your supervisor has not provided you with an updated performance appraisal, please notify FESB in writing before your present appraisal expires if you wish to request an exception to keep your application active.
- The expiration dates for submitting a copy of the performance appraisal are as follows: before 7/1 if your last name begins with the letters A-L and before 10/1 if your last names begins with M-Z. You can send a note along with the performance appraisal to indicate that it is a renewal for recurring vacancies, or you can also renew by submitting your performance appraisal along with a copy of the front page of your original recurring application.
- You can update your application for awards, education, and training sections of your application by submitting Form 4335-6 (other formats, i.e. Form 4335-1, are also acceptable).
- If you would like to update your responses to job elements, submit an application as outlined above with your updated performance rating. You may submit a new application no more than once a year.

<u>MERIT PROMOTION ANNOUNCED VACANCIES</u>

Vacancies are advertised using a vacancy announcement when the position is not covered by the recurring system, there are no candidates in the recurring system, a selection is not made from the recurring certificate due to insufficient candidates or a selection is not made from the reassignment system.

Am I eligible?

The requirements for announced vacancies are similar to the recurring system: you must have one year of specialized experience at the next lower level, i.e., one year as a GS-7 Inspector to apply for GS-8 positions. Food

MERIT PROMOTION ANNOUNCED VACANCIES (Continued)

Inspector positions at GS-10 and above require one year of processing experience at the next lower level, i.e., one year as a GS-9 Processing Inspector to apply to GS-10 positions.

- If you are a noncompetitive eligible (you now hold or formerly held the grade that was listed in the announcement), you must apply and be considered under the provisions of Transition MOU #3, Voluntary Reassignment System for Food Inspectors. If you do not have an active Reassignment Request on file for the location listed in the announcement, you must submit FSIS Form 4335-3, Employee Request for Reassignment Within Field Operations to receive consideration.

How do I apply?

- You may submit your application by using FSIS Form 4335-1 or you may use another format (OF-612, SF-171, resume, etc.) as long as it contains all of the information requested in the announcement. One application must be submitted for each announced vacancy.

- Submit your most recent performance rating (not more than 15 months old) with the application.

- When replying to job elements, be sure to limit your response for each element to two pages or less. Responses beyond the two-page limitation will not be considered.

- Your application is good only for the position advertised on the vacancy announcement. The open and closing dates are listed in the vacancy announcement. To be considered applications must be received by the close of business on the closing date. You will be sent an acknowledgement letter notifying you that your application was received. Please thoroughly review individual announcements for any special application requirements.

- If your application is referred to the Selecting Official, you will be notified of his/her selection decision.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN JOB INFORMATION AND FORMS?

- **Fax Request Service -** All field vacancy announcements and a variety of forms can be faxed directly to you through this service. Dial 1-800-370-3747, and enter extension 2002 to connect. You must have the index number of the item you would like faxed. If you would like a master index of all available items, enter 1 after you reach the 2002 extension. You will be prompted to enter your fax number and a master list of vacancies will be sent to you.

- **HP Desk -** A listing of all field vacancies can be accessed in HP Desk. After you are online, access the directory number for field vacancies. To receive an announcement for any vacancy listed, call FESB's answering service at 612-370-2034 or 1-800-370-3747 (ext. 11, followed by ext. 2700) to leave your name and address and the number of the announcement you would like sent to your address.

- **Internet -** Information on vacancies can also be found on the Internet at the following web-site: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/hrd/default.htm. The Office of Personnel Management's web site also list available jobs and can be accessed at www.usajobs.opm.gov.

- **Bi-Weekly Summary Listing** - Positions advertised with a Nationwide area of consideration are listed in the Bi-Weekly listing (paper copy) which is sent to all Headquarter plants.

- **District Wide Announcements** are sent to all headquarter plants.

Printed on recycled paper with at least 20 percent post-consumer content.

ATTACHMENT 3

LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM - DONOR APPLICATION

CASE NUMBER

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this form to request the transfer of earned annual leave to an approved leave recipient under P.L. 100-566. You may not transfer leave to your immediate supervisor. After completion, forward it to the office in your agency designated to approve leave donations.

PART I - COMPLETED BY DONOR

1. NAME OF DONOR *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*			2. POSITION TITLE
3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	4. SERIES, GRADE OR PAY LEVEL	5. ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE *(Agency, Division, Branch, Section)*	
6. OFFICE ADDRESS			7. OFFICE TELEPHONE NO.
8. NAME OF TIMEKEEPER	9. TELEPHONE NO. OF TIMEKEEPER	10. OFFICE ADDRESS OF TIMEKEEPER	

INSTRUCTIONS: Please review the information below. You may not transfer more than 1/2 of the annual leave you will earn during this calendar year unless a waiver is approved. To request a waiver, you must attach a statement as to why your situation is unusual.

If you will be employed full-time by the federal government for the full calendar year, the limits are as follows:

- 52 hours for employees in the 4-hour leave earning category,
- 80 hours for employees in the 6-hour leave earning category, or
- 104 hours for employees in the 8-hour leave earning category.

If you are a part-time employee or if you will not be employed for the full calendar year, you may compute your transfer limit using the appropriate formula below:

- Limit for part-time employee = $13 \times \frac{\text{Duty hours in Pay Period}}{80} \times$ leave earning category
- Limit for part-year employee = $\frac{\text{Number of Pay Periods to be worked}}{2} \times$ leave earning category

11. NUMBER OF HOURS OF ANNUAL LEAVE TO BE TRANSFERRED	12. NAME OF RECIPIENT	13. CASE NUMBER	14. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF RECIPIENT *(if known)*
15. ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION OF RECIPIENT *(Agency, Division, Branch, Section)*		16. OFFICE ADDRESS OF RECIPIENT	
17. NAME OF LEAVE SHARE COORDINATOR	18. TELEPHONE NO. OF LEAVE SHARE COORDINATOR	19. OFFICE ADDRESS OF LEAVE SHARE COORDINATOR	

CERTIFICATION OF VOLUNTARY DONATION: *I certify that I am making this donation entirely of my own free will and that no attempts have been mad to coerce me to donate annual leave. I understand that except for any leave unused by the recipient, I have no right under any circumstances (including medical emergency of my own) to have any of the donated leave restored.*

SIGNATURE OF DONOR	DATE

PART II . AGENCY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

1. CURRENT ANNUAL LEAVE BALANCE *(in hours)*	AS OF PAY PERIOD NUMBER:	2. ANNUAL LEAVE CATEGORY PER PAY PERIOD

APPLICATION APPROVED:

☐ **Yes** (This application meets all criteria required for annual leave transfer by law, regulation and Department policy. Transferred leave may be deducted from the brought forward annual leave balance in Pay Period Number: ____________

☐ **No** *(state reason for disapproval):*

SIGNATURE OF APPROVING OR DISAPPROVING OFFICIAL	TITLE	OFFICE TELEPHONE NO.	DATE

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

5 U.S.C. 6311 authorizes collection of this information. Your social security number is requested solely for the purpose of positively identifying leave donors so that donated leave can be deducted from the proper account. Although the disclosure of this information is voluntary, failure to furnish this information may result in disapproval of this application.

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